

ADVISORY

FROM THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

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Chairman Nunes Announces Hearing on Advancing the U.S. Trade Agenda: Benefits of Expanding U.S. Agriculture Trade and Eliminating Barriers to U.S. Exports

House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee Chairman Devin Nunes (R-CA) today announced that the Subcommittee will hold a hearing on the benefits of expanding U.S. agriculture trade and eliminating barriers to U.S. exports. **The hearing will take place on Wednesday, June 11, 2014, in 1100 Longworth House Office Building, beginning at 10:00 A.M.**

In view of the limited time available to hear the witnesses, oral testimony at this hearing will be from invited witnesses only. However, any individual or organization not scheduled for an oral appearance may submit a written statement for consideration by the Committee and for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing. A list of invited witnesses will follow.

BACKGROUND:

Agriculture trade is a major contributor to the United States economy. The United States is the world's leading agriculture exporter, setting a record in 2013 with \$144.1 billion in food and agriculture exports and enjoying an agriculture trade surplus of almost \$40 billion. As a result, one in three acres on American farms is planted for export, and U.S. agriculture is two times more reliant on overseas markets than the overall economy.

The benefits of agriculture trade are not limited to the U.S. farmers and ranchers who grow and raise food. Approximately one million jobs on and off the farm are supported by agriculture exports. These include workers that further process agricultural commodities into value-added products that are sought around the world and workers involved in the development, sale, financing, and distribution of agricultural exports. Agriculture exports also bring much needed economic growth and opportunity to America's rural communities.

Nonetheless, U.S. agriculture exports continue to face barriers to markets throughout the world, including tariffs, import quotas, and other explicit border restrictions. While some of these more traditional barriers have decreased over the past several years, many countries, such as Japan and Canada, still maintain prohibitively high tariffs and strict import quotas.

However, as traditional trade barriers are reduced, U.S. agriculture exports are facing more non-tariff barriers that are difficult to identify and address. These often consist of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures that are not based on science, and are developed and implemented behind closed doors without any outside input or public notice. Supposedly implemented to protect human, animal, or plant health and safety, such SPS measures are all too frequently disguised protectionism. Another barrier consists of the improper restriction of the use of generic food names by designating them as “geographical indications,” forcing U.S. agriculture exporters to either abandon markets or product names they have used for years.

The World Trade Organization, free trade agreements, and bilateral discussions have addressed many barriers to U.S. agriculture exports, but more progress is needed. The ongoing Trans-Pacific Partnership and U.S./EU trade agreement negotiations are a welcome opportunity to establish “WTO-plus” obligations to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers to U.S. agriculture exports. Agriculture trade will also benefit substantially from implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and liberalization of the flow of services through the Trade in Services Agreement. Finally, the U.S. Trade Representative and the U.S. Department of Agriculture need to make the most of bilateral discussions and international fora to press trade partners to tear down their unjustifiable import barriers.

In announcing this hearing, Chairman Nunes said, **“The U.S. economy and the vitality of rural America depend on our continued position as the world’s largest agriculture exporter. We must do more to knock down barriers imposed by other countries on our agriculture exports. The Congressional Bipartisan Trade Priorities Act (TPA) includes robust and expanded provisions to ensure that our exporters compete on a level playing field around the world, and I continue to call on the President to work with us to move this legislation and create more opportunities for U.S. farmers, ranchers, and processors, as well as manufacturers and service-providers.”**

FOCUS OF THE HEARING:

The focus of the hearing is on the benefits of U.S. agriculture trade to the U.S. economy and the challenges faced because of foreign barriers. The hearing focus will include: (1) U.S. successes as the world’s largest agriculture exporter, including job creation and economic growth; (2) foreign tariff and non-tariff barriers faced by U.S. agriculture exports; and (3) how current and future trade negotiations and other efforts can reduce those barriers.

DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS:

Please Note: Any person(s) and/or organization(s) wishing to submit for the hearing record must follow the appropriate link on the hearing page of the Committee website and complete the informational forms. From the Committee homepage, <http://waysandmeans.house.gov>, select “Hearings.” Select the hearing for which you would like to submit, and click on the link entitled, “Click here to provide a submission for the record.” Once you have followed the online instructions, submit all requested information. ATTACH your submission as a Word document, in compliance with the formatting requirements listed below, by the close of business on Wednesday, June 25, 2014. Finally, please note that due to the change in House mail policy, the

U.S. Capitol Police will refuse sealed-package deliveries to all House Office Buildings. For questions, or if you encounter technical problems, please call (202) 225-1721 or (202) 225-3625.

FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:

The Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record. As always, submissions will be included in the record according to the discretion of the Committee. The Committee will not alter the content of your submission, but we reserve the right to format it according to our guidelines. Any submission provided to the Committee by a witness, any supplementary materials submitted for the printed record, and any written comments in response to a request for written comments must conform to the guidelines listed below. Any submission or supplementary item not in compliance with these guidelines will not be printed, but will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

1. All submissions and supplementary materials must be provided in Word format and **MUST NOT** exceed a total of 10 pages, including attachments. Witnesses and submitters are advised that the Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record.
2. Copies of whole documents submitted as exhibit material will not be accepted for printing. Instead, exhibit material should be referenced and quoted or paraphrased. All exhibit material not meeting these specifications will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.
3. All submissions must include a list of all clients, persons and/or organizations on whose behalf the witness appears. A supplemental sheet must accompany each submission listing the name, company, address, telephone, and fax numbers of each witness.

The Committee seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-225-1721 or 202-226-3411 TTD/TTY in advance of the event (four business days notice is requested). Questions with regard to special accommodation needs in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats) may be directed to the Committee as noted above.

Note: All Committee advisories and news releases are available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.waysandmeans.house.gov/>.